

# Thought For The Week

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## Chasing the Wind:

### Solomon's Search for Meaning Under the Sun

On March 1, 2026, in a morning service, the preacher, Tom, delivered a compelling sermon titled "Chasing the Wind, Solomon's Search for Meaning Under the Sun" drawing from the book of Ecclesiastes. With scripture readings by Mike and John, the message explored King Solomon's profound reflections on life's futility without God. Tom's sermon, inspired by his personal affinity for Ecclesiastes despite its bleak tone, aimed to unpack Solomon's experiments with wisdom, wealth, power, and pleasure, ultimately pointing listeners toward true fulfillment in fearing God. This article provides a detailed summary of the full sermon, combining its key sections to capture its essence, warnings, and hopeful conclusion. Through vivid storytelling and biblical insights, Tom illustrated how even the greatest earthly achievements evaporate like mist, urging modern audiences to redirect their pursuits.

The sermon opened with scripture readings that set a somber yet honest tone. Mike read from Ecclesiastes 1:2: "Vanity of vanities, says the preacher. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." John followed with Ecclesiastes 1:14: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun. And indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind." Greeting the congregation warmly, Tom shared that Ecclesiastes resonates with his own "negative side," which he works to overcome. He noted the book's apparent depression but emphasized its uplifting end. This morning's focus was on "vanity," with an evening sermon planned on "nothing new under the sun." Tom described Solomon as the ultimate figure of success: the wisest man in history, possessing unimaginable wealth, vast palaces, vineyards, servants, armies, alliances, peace, and every conceivable pleasure. Solomon's accomplishments, including the magnificent Jerusalem temple and his even grander palace, reshaped history. Yet, reflecting on it all, Solomon declared, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Tradition identifies Solomon as the preacher in Ecclesiastes, offering one of the Bible's rawest examinations of life. Tom portrayed Solomon's journey as history's greatest personal experiment: testing wisdom, pleasure, work, wealth, and achievement to find what satisfies the soul. Solomon pursued everything without restraint, sparing no expense, only to conclude that all is "vapor." The Hebrew word "hebel," translated as "vanity" and repeated 38 times in the book, means vapor, mist, breath, or a puff of wind. Tom evoked the image of breath on a cold morning—visible, beautiful, but ungraspable and fleeting. Life's pursuits seem substantial but slip away like mist.

Tom connected this to wealth's transience, quoting Proverbs 23:5 where riches sprout wings and fly like an eagle. He shared relatable experiences: saving money only for unexpected bills like car repairs or medical expenses to erase it. Even billionaires lose fortunes overnight. Modern society, obsessed with wealth, pleasure, knowledge, status, and experiences, mirrors Solomon's chase. People hustle for promotions, bigger homes, better cars, or relationships, expecting fulfillment, but often wake to emptiness. Tom admitted doing this himself—thinking a house or paycheck would bring lasting happiness, only to find temporary joy followed by more longing.

Human desires are insatiable, as Solomon captured in Proverbs 27:20: "Death and destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man." Like the grave that never says "enough," desires perpetually hunger. Ecclesiastes 5:10 states: "Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with income. This too is meaningless." Tom pointed to billionaires who, despite vast fortunes, crave more, and shared personally that higher earnings lead to greater spending and feeling "more broke than ever." Material things promise to fill voids but deepen them, leaving endless chasing after the wind.

The sermon delved into Solomon's life, starting with his wisdom as the reign's foundation. In 1 Kings 3, Solomon requested wisdom to govern Israel, and God granted a uniquely discerning heart unmatched before or after (1 Kings 3:12). His knowledge spanned nature: botany (from cedars to hyssop), zoology (lions, oxen, foxes), ornithology (eagles, sparrows), herpetology/entomology (snakes, ants), and ichthyology (leviathan to minnows). He composed 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs, attracting global visitors. In modern terms, Solomon was a polymath celebrity—Elon Musk meets Oprah and Taylor Swift—famous through word-of-mouth in an era without social media.

Yet, in Ecclesiastes 1:16-18, Solomon reflected that his wisdom, including madness and folly, was chasing the wind: "With much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief." Intelligent people often face depression from perceiving unsolvable problems. Wisdom without eternal perspective reveals only brokenness and purposeless cycles. Tom challenged modern obsessions with degrees and education for fulfillment, noting they are vapor unless rooted in the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 9:10). Perpetual schooling wastes time and money compared to Bible study.

Wealth marked Solomon next: 666 talents of gold annually (about \$4 billion today), silver as common as stones, plus billions from trade. He built the temple, a 13-year palace, and exotic gardens, astonishing the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:7). His throne was gold-overlaid ivory, household items gold, ships importing peacocks and stones. Power extended from Euphrates to Egypt with vast chariots and horsemen. In Ecclesiastes 2:4-11, Solomon recounted projects: houses, vineyards, gardens, reservoirs, slaves, herds, treasures, singers, and a harem. He denied nothing, finding temporary delight, but surveyed it as meaningless—nothing gained under the sun.

This echoes modern celebrities and athletes with mansions and fame who confess emptiness. Tom cited Deion Sanders: NFL star, Super Bowl winner, millionaire, rapper ("Must Be the Money"), yet suicidal until finding Christ for true purpose. Many celebrities battle depression, drugs, and overdoses, but some discover fulfillment in faith. Solomon's opulence evaporated without joy, aligning with Jesus' parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:15-21): life isn't in possessions. Tom critiqued the "most toys wins" mentality, sharing how possessions like cars bring pain and anxiety. The rich fool's barns filled, but God called him a fool when his soul was required. Tom recalled a boss fixated on work and money even in cancer's grip, never enjoying life. Fortunes left to heirs are often squandered.

Jesus in Matthew 6:19-21 advises storing treasures in heaven, not earth, where they endure. Solomon's gains and the rich fool's barns end the same: vanity without richness toward God. Power couldn't fix oppression (Ecclesiastes 4:1), and pleasures like wine and 1,000 wives (1 Kings 11:3) led to vanity. Solomon's downfall—turning to foreign gods via wives—showed these as snares pulling from God.

Tom urged viewing Solomon as the ultimate example: worldly pursuits declared vanity. Today, we chase degrees, money, status, and pleasures, but without God, it's emptiness. Souls are made for Him; Jesus warned against serving mammon (Matthew 6:24). Jesus, who could surpass Solomon, chose poverty to follow God, knowing earthly things' meaninglessness.

Examine pursuits: repent of vanities, turn to lasting fulfillment. Solomon's conclusion (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14): "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment." Simple yet hard amid temptations—stop chasing wind.

Praise God for hope beyond vanity: Christ's living water (John 4:14), wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30), forgiveness, purpose, and eternal treasure (1 Peter 1:4). True life is in relationship with God through Jesus' death and resurrection. Tom invited responses: surrender to Christ, baptism for forgiveness, or prayer for struggling believers during the closing song.

This sermon, raw and relatable, reminds us that life's pursuits without God are futile. In a materialistic world, Tom's message calls for reorientation toward eternal truths, offering hope amid vanity.

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# Chasing the Wind:

## Solomon's Search for Meaning in Ecclesiastes

The preacher, Tom, delivered a stirring sermon titled “Chasing the Wind” at our morning service, rooted in the book of Ecclesiastes. With readings from Mike and John, the message centered on King Solomon’s unflinching verdict: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Solomon, the wisest, wealthiest, and most powerful king of his era, tested every avenue of human achievement—wisdom, pleasure, wealth, projects, and power—only to conclude that everything “under the sun” is vapor, or *hebel* in Hebrew: a fleeting mist that cannot be grasped.

Tom vividly described Solomon’s unparalleled life: unmatched divine wisdom spanning botany to zoology, annual gold intake worth billions today, a magnificent temple and palace, vast herds, singers, and a harem of a thousand. He built gardens, reservoirs, and amassed treasures, denying himself nothing. Yet, upon reflection, he declared it all meaningless—a chasing after the wind (Ecclesiastes 2:4–11). Nothing gained under the sun endured.

This ancient diagnosis resonates powerfully today. Modern celebrities, athletes, and billionaires—think Deion Sanders, who achieved NFL glory, Super Bowl rings, fame, and wealth, yet battled depression and suicidal thoughts until finding purpose in Christ—echo Solomon’s emptiness. We chase promotions, bigger homes, cars, degrees, and experiences, convinced they will satisfy, only to discover temporary highs followed by deeper longing. As Solomon wrote, “Whoever loves money never has enough” (Ecclesiastes 5:10), and “the eyes of man are never satisfied” (Proverbs 27:20).

Jesus warned against this in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:15–21) and taught us to store treasures in heaven, not on earth where moth and rust destroy (Matthew 6:19–21). Solomon’s downfall—turning to foreign gods through his wives—shows how even great gifts become snares without God at the center.

The sermon’s hope shines in its conclusion: “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). True fulfillment isn’t found in worldly pursuits but in Christ, who offers living water that satisfies forever (John 4:14), wisdom incarnate, and eternal treasure. Tom closed with an invitation to turn from vain chases and find lasting purpose in Jesus.

In a world obsessed with accumulation, this message reminds us: stop chasing the wind. The soul was made for God alone.

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